

DAVIES, JAMES (died 1760), Independent minister

Name: James Davies
Date of death: 1760
Child: Mary Williams (née Davies)
Child: Samuel Davies
Gender: Male
Occupation: Independent minister
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

a native of Llanedy parish, Carmarthenshire, educated at Carmarthen Academy. In 1712 he was ordained minister of Troed-rhiw-dalar and Llanwrtyd. Thence he removed in 1724 to the pastorate of Cwm-y-glo, between Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare; it was a joint pastorate with the distant congregation of Cefn Arthen near Llandovery (they had a common origin in the 'Brecknockshire church' of [Henry Maurice](#)); further, they were mixed congregations of Calvinists and Arminians. Davies's senior (Arminian) colleague was [Roger Williams](#) (1667 - 1730), who lived at Cefn Arthen (he had been in office since 1698, and upon his death in 1730 the union of Cefn Arthen and Cwm-y-glo came to an end, but not the doctrinal division within both congregations). Davies was not only a Calvinist but belonged to the new 'missionary' type of Dissenter. He itinerated vigorously in north Glamorgan and Monmouth ([Edmund Jones](#), *History of Aberystwith*, 99, and diary for 1773), and on the inception of the Methodist movement welcomed it warmly, inviting [Howel Harris](#) to preach in the Glamorgan hill-country; there are two letters of his (138 and 145, both of 1739) in the Trevecka collection at N.L.W. In 1738 the Arminian wing at Cwm-y-glo chose a well-to-do local farmer, [Richard Rees](#) of Gwernllwyn Uchaf, as Davies's co-pastor (he died 1749). Relations between the two men and their followers became increasingly difficult, and the 'left wing' seceded in 1747 to form the congregation (now Unitarian) of Cefn-coed-cymer. Owing to the expiry of the lease, Davies and his people left their historic meeting-house at Cwm-y-glo and bought (February 1749) the site at Merthyr Tydfil on which Ynysgau chapel stands; and in 1750 Davies was joined as co-pastor by his son [Samuel Davies](#). In 1751 the Aberdare members of Ynysgau hived off to form a new church. The younger Davies soon revealed Arminian tendencies, and the tale of Cwm-y-glo was repeated at Ynysgau. James Davies failed to control the situation, became well-nigh friendless, and died at Gwernllwyn Isaf, 29 April 1760. The diaries of [Philip David](#) of Penmain under 3 May, have a rueful reference to his former great popularity and the disesteem into which he had fallen through instability and time-serving; and [Edmund Jones](#) (15 August 1773) refers tersely to him as 'an apostate' - it would also seem from this passage that a daughter of James Davies's had married [David Williams](#) (1709 - 1784), the minister of Watford and Cardiff.

SAMUEL DAVIES was at Carmarthen with [Thomas Morgan](#) (1720 - 1799), who speaks most highly of him and attended his ordination in 1746 to a pastorate in Wiltshire. His defection to Arminianism (or Arianism) provoked unfriendly comment in the diaries of [Philip David](#) and of [Edmund Jones](#), but it is clear that he was held in great esteem and affection at Ynysgau. He died 18 March 1781 -the year of his birth has not been discovered, nor that of his father's.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

Josiah Thomas Jones, *Geiriadur Bywgraffyddol o Enwogion Cymru (Aberdâr 1867-70)*, i, 139

Hanes Eglwysi Annibynnol Cymru, ii, 256, 257-8, iv, 362

Charles Wilkins, *The history of Merthyr Tydfil* (Merthyr Tydfil 1867)

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